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Interview with Mr. Juozas BRAZAITIS

Lithuanian magazine Lietuvių Dienos, in Los Angeles, Calif., publishes an interview with Professor J. Brazaitis, President of the Lithuanian Front ( December, 1953 ).

Question. During 50 years of your life you have followed the political life of Lithuanian nation and you took active part in the decisions on vital problems of Lithuania. What is your opinion on national political maturity ?

Answer. If by political maturity is understood what our nation is seeking and by which means, and the evaluation of its own problems, Lithuanian political maturity during the days of its independence and now must be regarded as high. It seems to me, however, that this maturity has been better shown by the "lower" part of the nation - villagers, farmers and workers. The youth was the part of the nation which was most sensitive about the ideals of the people. This It seems that the sound instinct was better judge of the situation than the enlightened reason. The idealism of younger generation was better stimulant for action in the field where calculated realism of older generation suggested silence or even the path of opportunism.

Question. Which government, that of Tautininkai ( The Nationalist party) or the provisional government of 1941, must be regarded as the last government of Lithuania, both from ~~jur~~ legal and practical viewpoint ?

Answer. The provisional government was the last government of Lithuania. In various memoranda to foreign governments we have considered the provisional government as an expression of genuine aspirations of the people for independence, for its own state and government. By uprising and constitution of provisional government not only the sovereignty of Lithuania was restored, but also dispelled the Soviet propaganda myth that Lithuania had joined the Soviet Union of its own will... This was our important political argument. We cannot reject the facts we want others to believe.

Question. What are the activities of the Lithuanian Front for liberation after it withdrew from the VLIK ( the Supreme Committee for Liberation of Lithuania )? Does it have the backing in the resistance movement at home ?

Answer. There are three fields in which the emigre resistance activities may find their expression: the propaganda- diplomatic field, by emphasizing our cause among foreign powers, the field of cultural activities, by preserving emigre groups in within the framework of national traditions, and there are some special problems.

At the beginning , the most important activities of our liberation were in the first field. We had to fight against the obstacles everywhere. This required mobilization of all our forces and funds. Now the ~~situation~~ situation has become much better. In various ways the foreign countries are coming to help us. The situation is more critical in the second field. There is increasing danger that we might lose the younger emigre generation. Without abandoning the propaganda field of liberation ~~through the emigration~~ and the contact with foreign powers, the Lithuanian Front is concentrating most of its

activities in the field of preservation of those living in the free world.

As for backing from homeland, the members of the Lithuanian Front are active in the resistance movement there. When in 1944 VLIK urged all who were able to do so to stay at home, the representative of the LF was the only member of VLIK who obeyed to this order. The military and information leaders of the Lithuanian Front have followed his example. They joined the fate of many combatants for freedom. J. Daumantas in his book Partisans behind the Iron Curtain has enumerated the resistance organizations which had joined their efforts in common fight under one leadership. Among those organizations you will also find the Lithuanian Front( p. 238). To the members of Lithuanian Front here, in exile, those fighting at home are moral support. We want wish to remain true to this movement for freedom; we wish to preserve this fidelity, especially among the younger generation; we wish the faithful execution of the obligations, given to the resistance movement at home.

Question. Does Lithuanian Front consider that after the liberation of ~~Lithuania~~ Lithuania it will wind up its activities as a resistance movement ?

Answer. This problem will be solved after the liberation. Besides, it will be decided by those living over there, not by us.

Question. You were present at the Lithuanian Front conference in Europe on September 5-8, 1953. People wonders why this conference had not sent greeting telegrams to VLIK and to the chief of diplomatic missions, Mr. Lozoraitis ?

Answer. The Lithuanian Front evaluates the institutions and person-

alities not by their titles but by their contribution to the Lithuanian cause. Thus greeting telegrams should be decided not "to whom" but "for what deeds." A whole series of personalities and institutions were greeted by the conference in appreciation of their respective contributions.

Question . Does the Lithuanian Front want to return to VLIK, and if so, on what conditions ?

Answer. The Lithuanian Front was and still is for a united and common leadership of liberation. The Lithuanian Front had much contributed in building up such leadership in Lithuania. After VLIK was constituted, the Lithuanian Front took an active part in its activities. Later on these activities became impossible, and many efforts to improve internal status of VLIK were unsuccessful. Then the Lithuanian Front walked out of VLIK. By this act it tried to put their political groups which constitute VLIK and public opinion on guard and to foster the idea of renovation of VLIK. The statement, issued after withdrawal from VLIK, says among other things: "In order to improve ( VLIK) these things are needed: a) the reform of personnel, i.e. that the parties and resistance movements should assign to VLIK politically experienced and capable representatives; b) the political reform, i.e. that the clear and undoubtful character of VLIK, as an institution of resistance, be restored and that all its activities be concentrated on liberation and not on the interests of particular groups and blocks; c) the moral reform, i.e. that discrimination, slander be rooted out, and trust and solidarity be restored among the members of VLIK; d) the economic reform, i.e. that the funds, VLIK is getting from the society, be justified by real and clearcut deeds" ( Darbininkas, Oct. 7, 1952).

The Lithuanian Front understands that these are the conditions under which VLIK might be revived, and also the conditions, under which the Lithuanian Front ~~join~~ might rejoin VLIK in activities one way or another. Unfortunately, the conference in Europe came to the conclusion that during the last year VLIK had deteriorated and practically ceased to be leading factor in liberation activities.

Question. What are the relations between the Lithuanian Front and the Christian Democratic Party (the ~~KDP~~ KDP)? Does the Lithuanian Front cooperate with the Lithuanian Resistance Alliance (the IRS)?

Answer. Principally we ~~ready~~ are ready to cooperate with any group, and especially with the resistance movements. There are no basic obstacles for such cooperation in exile, as there were no such obstacles for cooperation between, say, political groups and the Riflemen's Association. No secret, however, that such obstacles do exist and they worsen the relations. In each cooperation there are two sides. I can speak <sup>only</sup> ~~not~~ about the Lithuanian Front. The Lithuanian Front would like to take the position which would, at least, acknowledge and respect the freedom of action to all groups and to ourselves, even if the genuine cooperation were impossible.

There is no direct cooperation with the IRS.

Question. There were many charges against you personally. What do you think about those charges and their authors?

Answer. I would not like to be the judge. They must judge it by themselves, according to their conscience. In my opinion, it is past. Better is to look ahead.

Question. Whether you intend to concentrate yourself on political, or scientific activities during the next 50 years of your life?

Answer. Are we able to do what we like? Do you think such a choice will exist in Lithuania? Our duties will be assigned to us, and we <sup>will</sup> ~~will~~ act accordingly in <sup>as</sup> ~~an~~ conscientious manner as possible.

Mr. Sidzikauskas on Lithuanian Conference.

In an interview with the correspondent of Naujienos Mr. V. Sidzikauskas, chairman of the COMMITTEE FOR A FREE LITHUANIA, explained, among other things, his opinion on the Lithuanian conference which should take place in the future ( Naujienos , Jan. 13, 1954 ).

He said:

" Such a conference would be useful; much had been thought and talked about it. The Committee for a Free Lithuania ( the LLK ) has prepared a detailed program for such conference and sent it to those who are concerned with it. In my opinion, the changing international situation urges that all factors of liberation be concerned with it. The Committee for a Free Lithuania was and still is in favor of such a conference. Under present conditions the best place for it would be the United States".

Mr. Sidzikauskas also expressed his hope that in 1954 the United Center of Information which was formed by the Supreme Committee of Liberation( VLIK ), American Lithuanian Council ( the ALT ) and the Committee for a Free Lithuania ( LAK ), will perform better job.

In conclusion, Mr. V. Sidzikauskas expressed his opinion that the newly adopted atomic strategy will somewhat delay the liberation of Eastern and Central Europe. Therefore he urged <sup>for</sup> a long-term policy which will finally bring about freedom to Lithuania.